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perty which no man wishes to make common: the movements of his soul, and the transports of his mind. The examination of principles, considered as opinions, concern us no more. Between God and the heart of man, what government dares to interfere!"

This pamphlet abounds with many good arguments, to show the impolicy of vesting in the crown the right of exercising a power of rejection over the nomination of the Bishops. In these remarks the Reviewer fully coincides. But he also takes the liberty to inquire why is dependence on any external power necessary? May not the nomination of Catholic Bishops be equally independent of the Pope as of the King? Dr. O'Reilly admits that this right of election consists with the general principle of their Church, and Charles Butler, a late Catholic writer, has shown that this mode is practised by them in other countries. Many important advantages would appear to result from the adoption of this independent mode, for which some enlightened Catholics are zealous advocates. Some years ago the Bishops were nominated by the Pope, mostly by the influence of the Catholic aristocracy of Ireland. Latterly the clergy of the diocese return the name of the object of their choice to the Pope, for his approbation. A germ of improvement may be perceived in this manner of election, and we trust there is room to hail the increasing liberality of future days.

The friends to free discussion, well knowing the inestimable value of it, cannot but be anxious that it should universally prevail; and that Catholics and Protestants, however they may differ in some respects, forgetting former times, in which both have erred, may cordially unite in the wish that the disposition and power to persecute for diversity of opinion may cease. As the possession of power has a strong tendency to corrupt the human heart, let us hope for the extension and prevalence of that liberal policy, when neither party shall have the dominancy over the other; but both be contented without seeking for mastery, to live as brethren. In former days both parties set up a *standard mind*, and mutually persecuted each other. The absurdity of forcing opinions is gradually becoming more apparent, and notwithstanding some unfavourable paroxysms now and then occurring, we have confidence in the progress of liberality, and in an enlightened and enlarged policy superceding the dogmata of intolerance and bigotry. K.

An Introduction to the Irish Language, in three parts, 1, an Original and Comprehensive Grammar. 2, Familiar Phrases and Dialogues. 3, Extracts from Irish Books and Manuscripts, in the Original character, with copious Tables of the Contractions. By the Rev. W. Neilson, D.D. p.p. 282. Dublin, Wogan, 1808. *price* 6s. 6d.

INTERESTED as we feel for every publication which respects the honour and improvement of our country, we have not contemplated without pleasure, the recent attempts which have been making to introduce a taste for the study of the Irish language. A language which is spoken by at least one third of the inhabitants of the British isles, and by more than three fourths of the natives of Ireland, has some claim to attention; especially in an age which boasts of its familiarity with the dialects of the East, of having penetrated the wilds of Africa in quest of knowledge, and enriched its etymological repositories by vocabularies from the islands of the Pacific, and the banks of the Ohio.

Many circumstances, however, have contributed to discourage the study of our vernacular tongue. The distracted state of the country was for many ages unfavourable to its cultivation, and the narrow and mistaken policy of England, during the reigns of Elizabeth and James I. passed strict injunctions to prevent it from being longer spoken in our schools. Due care also has been taken to depreciate its beauty and excellence, by representing it as harsh and unmusical, abounding in guttural sounds, and aspirates, and presenting a constant discordance between its orthography and pronunciation. When Anne with a liberality worthy of a Queen, proposed to establish Professorships of the Irish language, in her universities, she was dissuaded by the Duke of

Ormond, who, to convince her that it was a barbarous dialect, resembling the barking of a dog, constructed the following harsh and nonsensical sentence, *d'ith damh dubh obh amh, i. e.* a black ox eat a raw egg. This specimen, it must be acknowledged, is not very harmonious, but where is there a combination of harsher sounds than that contained in the translation? "a black ox eat a raw egg!"

Those who are well versed in the Irish language, and they are the proper judges, contend that in harmony, copiousness, and strength, it equals the ancient Greek; that it is the root of the Latin of the twelve tables; that it was spoken by Hamilcar and Hannibal; and that it was not only the primitive language of Europe, and of a great part of Asia and Africa, but of paradise itself.

Though we do not carry our ideas of its antiquity to quite so remote a period, we readily agree with the learned Vallancey, "that it is free from the anomalies, sterility, and heteroclite redundancies, which mark the dialects of barbarous nations; it is rich and melodious; it is precise and copious, and affords these elegant conversions, which no other than a thinking and lettered people can use or require." "*Est quidem Lingua Hibernica, et elegans cum primis, et opulenta,*" says the learned Usher. Of its indispensible necessity to the antiquarian, the ingenious author of the Archæologia Britannica, has given ample testimony. He found in Irish the origin of many words, whose roots he had vainly endeavoured to find in the Welsh, the Cornish, and Armoric.

That the Irish language is calculated to express the warmest feelings of the heart, with peculiar force and pathos, every one who has but a superficial knowledge of our Bardic compositions, must allow. The warm-hearted, generous, and high spirited Irishman, would soon have created a language, had he not been taught one, expressive of his feelings. Accordingly the wild strains of our Bards have long been a subject of great and deserved admiration, and there are flowers of poesy to be culled in the unfrequented, and almost unknown paths of the Hibernian Muse, not less beautiful and fragrant, than those which adorned Parnassus or bloomed by the banks of the Helicon.

The principal objection to the study of the Irish language, is the scarcity of valuable books. Such as have escaped the ravages of time, and the persecution of more formidable enemies, are now difficult of access, being locked up in the cabinets of the curious, or the libraries of universities. There is reason, however to hope that this objection will soon be removed, and that our ancient historical records, poems, and other compositions will be drawn from their obscurity. A Society has been lately established in Dublin, for the investigation and revival of ancient Irish literature, and a volume published under their auspices containing several important tracts in the original Gælic or Irish, literally translated into English. The author of this work waits only for public patronage, which we sincerely wish may be literally granted, to publish the Finnian Tales and Poems, the source of M'Pherson's Ossianic imposture, in their genuine form.

It is humiliating to the pride of Irish literature, to reflect that its chief promoters have been obliged to foreign countries for a patronage and support which they vainly solicited at home. The first grammar of our language was published by the Rev. Francis O'Molloy at Rome in 1677, and the second by H. M'Curtin, at Louvain in 1728. These were followed by that of general Vallancey in 1782. The Rev. Mr. Shaw, and the Rev, Mr. Stewart, natives of Scotland, have also contributed to the revival of the Gaelic tongue by the publication of their respective Grammars.

In 1795, the Belfast press published a Gælic Magazine, *Bolg an tsolair*, containing some of the elements of Grammar, and a variety of selections from the translations of Miss Brook. It was intended to continue the publication, but from want of encouragement, or some other cause, which we have not been able to ascertain, only one number made its appearance. Two new Grammars have been just published, one by an anonymous author, who need not be ashamed to declare his name, and the other which is the subject of Review, by the Rev. Dr. Neilson, of Dundalk.

We are pleased to meet in the preface of the former, the following just tribute to General Vallancey. "This profound and erudite scholar has successfully endeavoured to rescue our language from oblivion; he published an elaborate Grammar of it, which contains much curious and original information, and particularly *a laborious arrangement of the irregular verbs, for which every successive Grammarian must acknowledge himself particularly indebted.*" We coincide perfectly in this opinion, and think it would not have detracted any thing from the merit of Dr. Neilson's work to have made the same candid acknowledgement, though it might have suggested to him the propriety of expunging the word "original" from his title page. His Grammar neither is nor could be original. See M'Curtin, Vallancey, and Shaw: from all of whom he has been obliged to borrow, and from whom, if he had not borrowed, his work must of necessity have been defective. Could any man at the present day compose an original French or English Grammar? We may improve on the labours of our predecessors, but to speak of originality is absurd. We make these observations not to extenuate the merits of the work. We have long entertained a high opinion of Dr. Neilson's erudition, and hope that he may enjoy the due reward of his labours, fame and profit. Every classical scholar should feel indebted to him for his excellent Greek Exercises. That he has rendered a service to the cause of Irish letters the work before us clearly evinces. It is a work of time, labour, and an accurate knowledge of the language. It is also the most copious we have seen. Indeed we think it faulty in this respect, and though we should be unwilling to suspect Dr. Neilson of an inclination to book-making, we were rather surprised to find that he had extended the declension of the verb *Bi*, through no less than five octavo pages, and *Buail* through eight and a half. He has sacrificed too much to modern opinion, and to the prevalent propensity of assimilating all languages in their Etymology and Syntax to Latin and Greek. This is particularly observable in the declension of the verbs. Tense follows tense, and mode follows mode, which neither the genius of the language, nor the custom of our fore-fathers will justify. The Irish, like the Hebrew, has only two modes, the indicative and imperative, "The expressions of conditional will, possibility, liberty, obligation, &c. which form the optative mode in Greek, and the subjunctive mode in Latin are all formed by certain auxiliaries annexed to the indicative mode." As Grammars are intended for the use of learners, simplicity cannot be too much studied, and for this reason we prefer the formula of the conjugation of the verbs *Danaim* and *Brisim*, contained in the 85th page of the anonymous Grammar. The learner of moderate capacity can commit them both to memory in a short time, and obtain from them a clear and accurate idea of the conjugation of other verbs. But the very appearance of Dr. Neilson's *Buail*, with its present affirmatives, and present negatives, present and future affirmatives, and present and future negatives; consuetudinal affirmatives, and consuetudinal negatives, with its optative moods, &c. is absolutely terrifying, and seems to present at the very commencement, an insurmountable obstacle to the beginner.

Particular attention has been paid to the Syntax, and each rule is illustrated by a great number and variety of examples. The work also contains some familiar dialogues which will be useful to the student, and a translation of the songs of Deardra, from the death of the three sons of Usna. If these were intended for an exercise to learners, they are too loosely translated, and we should prefer O'Flanagan's mode, though more shackled, of rendering word for word.

"Delight of my soul, a shower of tears shall fall upon your grave, is not a translation of"

O cuaid mo leannan uaimsi,
Do dean air uaige ceata.

Since thou art gone from me, my beloved, a shower, &c.

We particularly object to the translation of the following verse,

Glean laoige, on glean laoige
Do 'codlainn san mhoirin min:
Iasg, is fion, is saill bruic,
Fa hi mo cuid angleann laoige.

Glenlee, oh Glenlee! amidst thy

shady thickets I slept, or feasted with my love in Glenlee.

Thus literally by O'Flanagan,

Vale of Laith, O in the vale of Laith
I *used to sleep under soft coverlets,*
Fish and venison, and the delicious
prime of the badger,
Was my repast in the vale of Laith.

A principal object of learning languages is to acquire a knowledge of the manners and customs of the people by whom they were spoken, and therefore the naked idea of the original, however foreign to our modes, is to be preferred to all the meretricious, and accommodating drapery of translation. Dr. Neilson thought perhaps that it was unbecoming a Lady of Deardra's rank and consequence to praise the delight she had in feasting on a *brock*, and therefore, omitted the passage in his translation. But this very circumstance is an internal evidence of the antiquity of the poem. No such ideas are to be found in M'Pherson's Ossian, a certain proof that it is an imposition. The language and manners of his heroes and heroines are such as never existed in any age nor in any country.

There is a striking difference between the orthographies of Dr. Nelson and O'Flanagan. The latter has been endeavouring to restore the true orthography, and it is much to be wished that Irish scholars would fix on some determinate standard, to prevent the errors of ignorant or careless transcribers. H.

Practical Sermons, on interesting subjects, by Thomas E. Higginson, A.B. Curate of Lambeg, and Master of the Lisburn Academy. Sermon 1st, 8vo. pp. 24. Belfast, Smyth and Lyons. Price, 10d.

THE author's design in publishing this sermon, which we are informed, is intended as the commencement of a series on similar subjects, reflects much credit on him as a teacher of Christianity. They are meant, to use his own words,

"To exhibit a specimen of discourses calculated for general utility, and uniting an expos tion of the Christian Faith with its practical tendency, avoiding too frequent recurrence to controversial disputations. He is apprehensive that the generality of our warm disputants have never gathered their creed from the Bible, but having formed an attachment to some favourite sentiment before they were qualified to come to any settled decision from the scriptures, they save themselves the trouble of a laborious research, by using the compilations of some favoured guide, and judge of the doctrines of Scripture by his exposition of them.

"The beauty of truth is best exhibited in the Bible, and were men to employ such a portion of their time in studying it, as they expend on human compositions, and studying it with a proper temper of mind, with a resolution to do, as well as to know their duty, and with an application for divine light and assistance, we should soon see a different aspect of things in the Christian Church; divisions would cease among us, unity would take the place of discord, and truth and righteousness prevail over error and sin.

"To forward this desirable end, to exhort to a spirit of love and union among Christians, and as a great *mean* (means) of promoting it, to an unbiassed enquiry for ourselves into the sacred records, to explain the essential doctrines of our faith in a scriptural and practical manner, and in these eventful times to strengthen the stability of these kingdoms, *wherein only the Ark of God may be said to rest*, by pointing them to the strong hold for strength, and by exhortations to loyalty and piety, is the object the author has in view by his intended publications."

We heartily agree with our author in lamenting the deadly effects of the various differences of opinion existing in the Christian world, both on the happiness of society in general, and on the mind of every individual who devotes his thoughts to the investigation of the controverted points; we also coincide with him, that when the Bible is the standard by which all these differences must be ultimately regulated, it would be better to refer to it at once, than to depend on the expositions given by partial, perhaps ill-informed advocates. When the text is plain, why turn to the comment? By this mode of proceeding, one essential point, and which the author of these sermons justly deems of the first